

### Remarks/Arguments

This response is to the Office Action dated September 8, 2004.

Claims 1, 2, 5-8 and 10-13 remain in this application. Claims 4, 9, 15, 18, 19 and 27 have been canceled in this response.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 USC 112 first paragraph. The amendment to claim 1 which is clearly supported by the specification, for example at:

Page 3 line 11 ( "an integral, sanitary gasket or seal ") which shows that the term seal and gasket are meant to be interchangeable,

Page 5, lines 3-6 ("The present invention relates to **a sealing device** such as a potting of a membrane, a seal edge on a membrane or a screen or a support layer surrounding the membrane or other component of a filter device, **a gasket on a membrane port or outer edge or a screen port**, an O-ring and other similar sealing components typically used in the manufacture of filtration devices." [ Applicants emphasis]) which shows the formation of a seal or gasket around a membrane or screen port, as well as the use of the term "sealing device" now in claim 1, and

Page 5, lines 21-24 ("The present invention will now be explained in relation to several of the preferred embodiments, in particular in relation to an embodiment of the invention used on screens of a cassette type filtration device. However, through these illustrations, it is not meant to limit the invention to those particular embodiments.") which establishes that the explanation applied to the embodiments of the screens also applies equally to the other embodiments of the invention such as those cited at Page 5, lines 3-6.

It is believed this amendment is supported by the text of the specification and overcomes the current rejection.

Claims 2, 4, 10, 13 and 14 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) in view of Wyatt et. al. (US 3,679,059). It is argued that Wyatt teaches a screen as in claim 2 and a module having one or more ports in its edges, with integral gaskets formed through the screen around the ports with the thickness of the gaskets being greater than the screen layers and the gaskets being formed from thermoplastic elastomers. Applicants disagree.

Wyatt does show a screen having an integral gasket formed around its edges and ports. Those ports however are either filled or substantially filled with the liquid material that forms the gasket and into which the screen is dipped or coated and the ports need to be formed after the application of the gasket material by cutting or stamping out the port (Column 3, line 75 "Manifolds 19, 20, 21, 22 are then cut out." and column 4, lines 55-57 "...and the flow channel areas in each corner- which had become covered or partially covered by polyurethane in the pasting process- were stamped out."). This is quite unlike the presently claimed invention in which the seal or gasket is formed around the port and through the screen or membrane and no cutting or stamping is required. Moreover Wyatt fails to teach the use of thermoplastic elastomers as the sealing/gasketing material. Column 1, lines 1-75 have been cited as showing this claimed element however Applicants find no such statement in the cited portion of the text to support rejection based upon it. At best the reference mentions the use of thermoplastics (line 63) but that does not include thermoplastic elastomers as is required by the claims.

Column 1 lines 60-67 of Wyatt has been cited against claims 10 and 13 as showing the thickness of the gaskets extend from the screen layer. Applicants find no teaching in that cited

section to support this contention, merely a general recitation that the thickness be such that it forms a seal with the adjacent membrane. As is known in the prior art a flat gasket can form such a seal. Column 2 lines 8-10 state the gasket is the same thickness as the mesh. Lines 10-13 suggest the use of spacers to control the thickness of the gasket layer.

As the reference fails to teach each and every element of the claim, in particular the use of thermoplastic elastomers to form the seal or gasket it is not an anticipatory reference.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Van Hoek et al (US 2,758,083) in view of Wyatt et al (US 3,679,059) . Applicants disagree.

Van Hoek teaches using glue, such as a urea formaldehyde glue or heat to fasten or seal the two membranes 14,15 together at their respective apertures (Column 3, lines 40-60). Wyatt relates to the formation of an edge or peripheral gasket or seal on a screen. Wyatt as explained above does not teach or suggest the use of thermoplastic elastomers as the seal or gasket material.

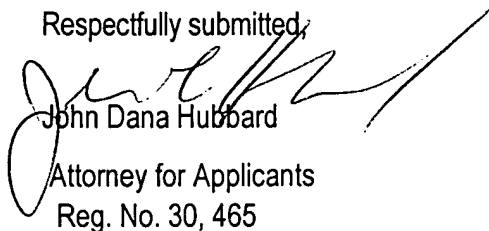
One of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to Wyatt to replace Van Hoek's glue or heat sealing as the Wyatt materials would not have provided the ability that Van Hoek looks for, namely something that fastens the two membranes together in a watertight manner. As there is no teaching or suggestion in Wyatt that one could fasten adjacent sheets together with its material, there would be no motivation to one of skill in the art to consider their combination. As such, the prima facie case of obviousness has been overcome.

Claims 5-8, 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Wyatt et al (US 3,679,059) . Applicants disagree. Firstly Wyatt does not teach all the limitations of claims 2 and 10 as shown in the discussion above relative to the 102 rejection. It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make extensions of the seals or gaskets in view of Wyatt. More particularly,

it would not have been obvious to do so by the claimed lengths of the claims as Wyatt doesn't suggest or provide motivation for one to do so absent the teachings of the present invention.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and remarks.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Dana Hubbard", is written over the typed name.

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